

The invention claimed is:

1. A cage for holding and transporting livestock comprising:
 - a frame that provides the general structure and shape of the cage, the frame defining at least one opening at one end of the cage and a cavity near the bottom of the cage;
 - at least one door sized to generally fit in the at least one opening, having a bottom portion and a top horizontal rod and adapted to prevent livestock from exiting the at least one opening when the door is in a closed position;
 - a member attached to the frame along which the top horizontal rod of the at least one door rides when the at least one door is opened; and
 - the cavity in the frame being adapted to receive the bottom portion of the at least one door when the door is in the closed position so that the at least one door will not open unintentionally.
2. The cage defined in claim 1 wherein the top horizontal rod of the at least one door has a shaft portion with a longitudinal axis, and a first end having a longitudinal axis that is different from the longitudinal axis of the shaft portion.
3. The cage defined in claim 2 and further comprising at least one lifting lug with a hole therein.
4. The cage defined in claim 3 wherein the cage comprises four lifting lugs.
5. The cage defined in 4 wherein the four lifting lugs are each sized so that when the cages are stacked, there is a vertical gap between the lifting lugs of a first cage and the lifting lugs of a second cage directly above or below the first cage.
6. The cage defined in claim 1 and further comprising at least one cradle attached to the frame near the top of the at least one opening and adapted to receive the bottom of the at least one door.

7. The cage defined in claim 1 wherein the cage includes a grate with an upper member that is shaped such that the at least one door can be removed from the cage.
8. A cage for holding and transporting livestock, comprising:
 - a frame that provides the general structure and shape of the cage, the frame defining at least one opening at one end of the cage;
 - at least one door adjacent the at least one opening and having a bottom; and
 - at least one cradle attached to the frame and adapted to receive the bottom of the at least one door to hold the door open when the bottom of the at least one door rests in the at least one cradle.
9. The cage defined in claim 8 and further including a side grate with a top member and wherein the at least one door includes a horizontal top rod, a portion of which is engaged with the top member.
10. The cage defined in claim 9 wherein the at least one cradle is two cradles.
11. The cage defined in claim 10 and further including a cavity in the bottom of the frame adapted to receive the bottom of the door when the door is in the closed position.
12. The cage defined in claim 8 wherein the at least one cradle is two cradles.
13. The cage defined in claim 8 and further including a cavity in the bottom of the frame adapted to receive the bottom of the door when the door is in the closed position.
14. A method of loading livestock into a cage comprising the steps of:
 - (a) providing a cage including a frame having a front and a lower cavity, a door adjacent the front of the cage, the door having a top and a bottom, and a cradle attached to the frame, the door being in an initial position with the bottom of the door in the lower cavity;

(b) opening the door by motivating the top of the door rearwardly sufficient to pull the bottom of the door out of the lower cavity of the frame;

(c) placing the bottom of the door in the cradle to hold the door in the open position;

(d) loading livestock into the cage; and

(e) returning the door to its initial position.

15. The method of claim 14 wherein the cage includes a side grate with a top member, the door having a top horizontal rod at the top of the door, the top horizontal rod in engagement with the top member of the side grate.

16. The method of claim 15 wherein the step of returning the door to its initial position includes pulling the bottom of the door out of the cradle by hand.

17. The method of claim 16 wherein the step of returning the door to its initial position further includes placing the bottom of the door into the lower cavity by hand.

18. A cage for holding and transporting livestock comprising:

a frame that provides a general structure and shape of the cage, the frame defining at least one opening at one end of the cage and a cavity near the bottom of the cage;

at least one door sized to generally fit in the at least one opening, having a bottom portion in a top bar and adapted to prevent livestock from exiting the at least one opening when the door is in a closed position;

at least one cradle attached to the frame near the top of the at least one opening and adapted to receive the bottom of the at least one door;

an elongated member attached to the frame along which the top bar of the at least one door slides when the at least one door is opened;

a grate with an upper member that is shaped such that the at least one door can be removed from the cage; and

the cavity and the frame being adapted to receive the bottom portion of the at least one door when the door is in closed position so that the at least one door will not open unintentionally.